

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

**Listing Of Claims:**

Claim 1 (**currently amended**): An ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

a carriage mounted with a printing head for ejecting ink and for scanning the printing head in a main scanning direction;

a suction pump for sucking ink from the printing head;

capping means for performing a cap closing operation in which an ejection port surface of the printing head is covered with a cap when said suction pump sucks ink from the printing head and performing a cap opening operation in which the cap is separated from the ejection port surface after suction by said suction pump;

help means for performing a cap opening help operation that facilitates the cap opening operation, when said capping means performs the cap opening operation;

detection means for detecting whether the cap opening operation by said capping means can be performed or not; and

control means for causing said help means to perform the cap opening help operation if said detection means detects that the cap opening operation by said capping means cannot be performed.

Claim 2 (**canceled**).

Claim 3 (**original**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cap opening and cap closing operations by said capping means are performed by means of moving of the carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 4 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said detection means detects whether said carriage can move or not.

Claim 5 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said detection means includes means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.

Claim 6 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said detection means includes means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage.

Claim 7 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said detection means includes means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the predetermined value continues for a predetermined time.

Claim 8 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said help means includes means for stopping the cap at the printing head for a predetermined time.

Claim 9 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said help means includes means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction.

Claim 10 (**previously presented**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said help means includes means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap for a predetermined time.

Claim 11(**currently amended**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said help means ~~has a combination of~~ comprises first help means for stopping the cap at the printing head for a predetermined time, second help means for performing a micro-reciprocating motion of said carriage in the main scanning direction, and third help means for causing predetermined positive pressure inside the cap for a predetermined time.

Claim 12 (**currently amended**): An ink jet printing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said detection means ~~is means of a combination of~~ comprises first detection means for detecting a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage, second detection means for detecting whether a value per unit of time of current flowing in a power source for driving said carriage is more than a predetermined value and the value more than the predetermined value continues for a predetermined time, and third detection means for detecting a moving distance of said carriage by means of an encoder detecting a position of said carriage.